



**CITY OF SUNNYVALE  
REPORT  
Planning Commission**

**February 27, 2006**

**SUBJECT:**           **2006-0036 – Centex Homes** [Applicant/Owner]: Application for a   on a 4.8-acre site The property is located at **610 Alberta Avenue** (near Hollenbeck Av) in an R-2/PD (Low-Medium Density Residential/Planned Development) Zoning District.

Motion               Special Development Permit (SDP) to modify a previously approved SDP 2005-0622 (approved 10/25/05) to allow for an increase in height from two to three stories and an increase of approximately 370 square feet to one of three plans.

**REPORT IN BRIEF**

**Existing Site Conditions**           Vacant mobile home park. Approved 55-unit single-family home development.

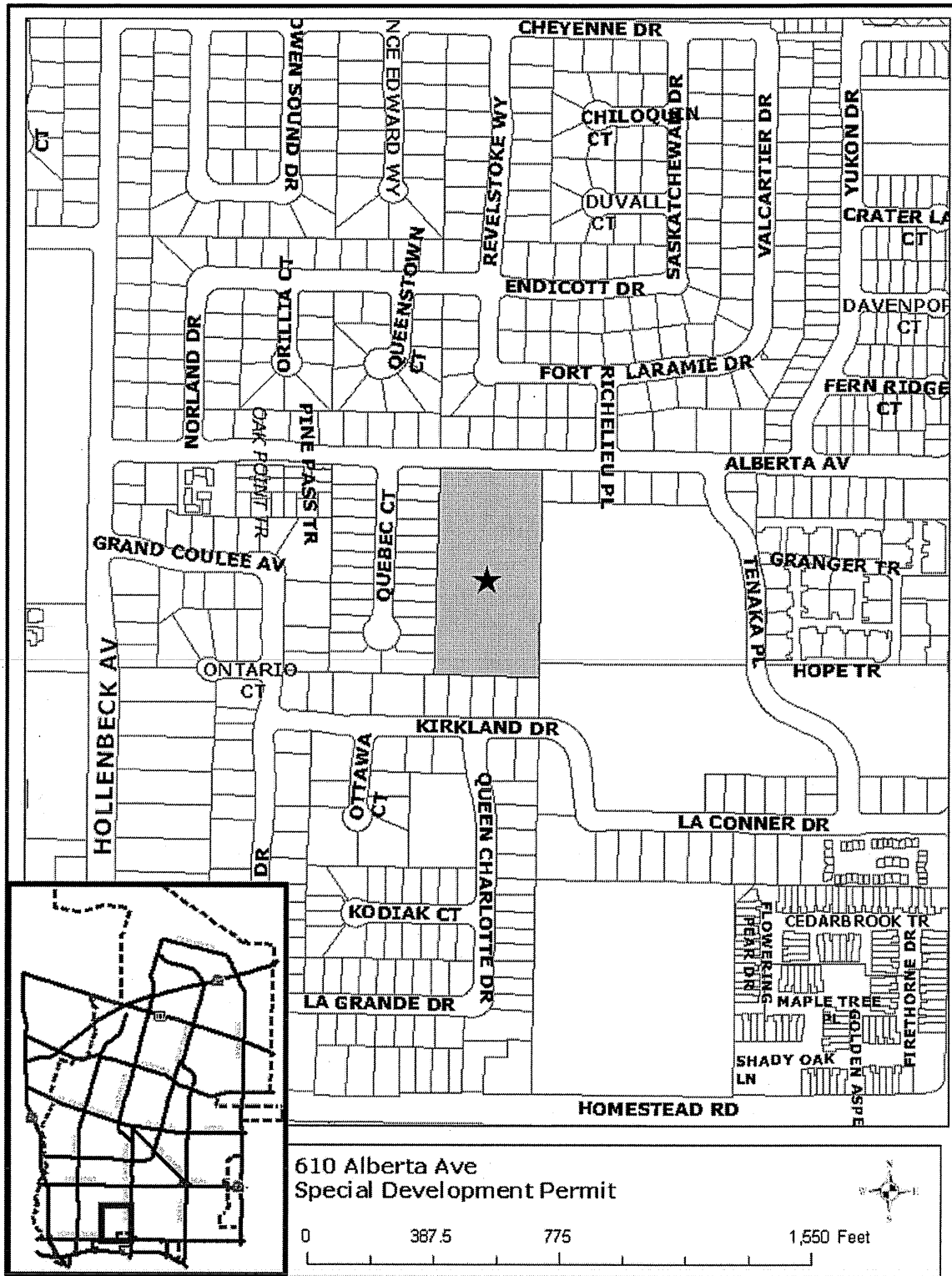
**Surrounding Land Uses**

North	Duplexes across Alberta Avenue.
South	Apartments
East	Apartments
West	Apartments

**Issues**                               Architecture, Building Height, Floor Area Ratio, Compatibility with Neighborhood.

**Environmental Status**           A Negative Declaration was previously adopted with Permit 2005-0622 for 55 single-family homes.

**Staff Recommendation**           Deny request for a third story on one of three house design plans.



**PROJECT DATA TABLE**

	<b>APPROVED PROJECT 2005-0622</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>	<b>REQUIRED/ PERMITTED</b>
<b>General Plan</b>	Low-Medium Density Residential	Same	Low-Medium Density Residential
<b>Zoning District</b>	R-2/PD (Low Medium Density/Planned Development)	Same	R-2/PD (Low Medium Density/Planned Development)
<b>Lot Size (s.f.)</b>	Approved 3,080- 4,800	Same	Per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Lot Coverage (%)</b>	Approx. 37%	Same	Per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>	59.8%	60.7%	Per SDP 2005-0622 (Small Lot Guidelines recommend 50%)
<b>No. of Units</b>	55	Same	55 max.
<b>Density (units/acre)</b>	11	Same	12 max.
<b>Meets 75% min?</b>	11	Same	9 min.
<b>Bedrooms/Unit</b>	3-4	Same (proposed bonus room could be used as bedroom although not indicated as such)	Per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Unit Sizes (s.f.)</b>	2,230-2,288	2,213-2,668	Per SDP 2005-0622 unless modified by Planning Commission
<b>Building Height (ft.)</b>	24 ft. – 27 ft.	Up to 34.5 ft. on Plan 3 (18 units in 55-unit project)	30 ft.
<b>No. of Stories</b>	2	3	2 max.
<b>Setbacks for entire project</b>			

	<b>APPROVED PROJECT 2005-0622</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>	<b>REQUIRED/ PERMITTED</b>
<b>Front (facing property from Alberta Avenue)</b>	13-20	Same	13-20 per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Left Side (facing property from Alberta Avenue)</b>	11-18	Same	11-18 per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Right Side</b>	11-18	Same	11-18 per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Rear</b>	11-18	Same	11-18 per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Setbacks for Individual Homes Along Private Street (First Story/Second Story)</b>			
<b>Front</b>	3/18	Same	3/18 per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Left Side</b>	2.5 (lots 44 & 46 where parking is notched out) otherwise 4/16	Same	4/16 per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Right Side</b>	6-8/6-10	Same	6-8/6-10 per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Rear</b>	11-18	Same	11-18 per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Parking</b>			
<b>Total Spaces</b>	234	Same	234 min. per SDP 2005-0622
<b>Standard Spaces</b>	110	Same	110 min. per SDP 2005-0622

★ Starred items indicate newly proposed deviations from Sunnyvale Municipal Code requirements and SDP 2005-0622.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Description of Proposed Project**

The applicant proposes to modify the approved plans for one third of the approved single-family dwelling units in a previously approved project. The

original project (File No. 2005-0622) was approved by the City Council on October 25, 2005. The project included a General Plan amendment, rezoning and development plan approval for a 55-unit single-family home project on a private street. The homes were approved at two stories with a maximum height ranging between 24 and 27 feet. The applicant would like add a third story bonus room to one of the approved designs that would result in one third of the approved units having a third story up to 34 feet in height.

### **Background**

**Previous Actions on the Site:** The following table summarizes previous planning applications related to the subject site.

<b>File Number</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Hearing/Decision</b>	<b>Date</b>
2005-0622	GPA/Rezoning/SDP for 55 single-family home	City Council/Approved	10/25/2005
2005-0444	Mobile Home Park Conversion	City Council/Approve	6/14/2005

### **Environmental Review**

A Negative Declaration was adopted with the previously approved project 2005-0622. No additional environmental review was conducted for this project modification request.

### **Special Development Permit**

**Site Layout:** The project site plan was approved previously by the City Council in October 2005. No modifications to the site plan are requested with this permit application.

**Architecture:** The applicant has proposed three different home models. Originally, all were to be two stories, and each model would have two different front elevation designs available to provide the appearance of six different unit designs. The applicant proposes to make use of the same stucco, horizontal siding and vertical siding as well as substantial trim around windows and architectural elements as were previously approved in SDP 2005-0622. All elevations would have a minimum of two siding materials. Some front elevations would make use of three materials to add variety to the streetscape. The general flavor of the architecture is contemporary tract-style with trim and front feature elements (like columned porches) of the Craftsman style.

The proposed third story on Plan 2 was not an original part of the project design. The Plan 2 has not been totally redesigned to have a third floor. The applicant has “applied” the third story to the two-story Plan 2 from the original

project approval. The City's architectural guidelines and techniques for reviewing single-family homes do not specifically address third stories. All single-family zoning districts in Sunnyvale have a two-story limit by Code. If approved, this project would be the first single-family home neighborhood in the City with three-story homes.

The following Guidelines were considered in the analysis of the project architecture for the proposed Plan 3 modification:

<b>Single-Family Home Design Techniques</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<i>Do not locate garages forward of other habitable portions of the house unless that is the predominant pattern in the neighborhood.</i>	Proposed garage is located behind the front elevation of the porches and other habitable portions of the homes.
<i>Locate home entries so that they are visible from the street.</i>	The proposed home has a front door facing the street.
<i>If a traditional second floor form is necessary, set the front, rear, and sides of the second floor back from first floor walls. In general, it is best to set second floor areas back as far from the front façade of the home (e.g. five feet or more). Side and rear façade setbacks of three to five feet are generally sufficient. Care should be given to avoiding second story bulk near the front of the home when similar bulk is absent from adjacent homes.</i>	The proposed third story on Plan 3 is setback further than the second story; however shows additional bulk from the street that will not be apparent with adjacent homes.
<i>When designing homes, be mindful of the exterior appearance as well as the interior functions. Relate the location of windows on the second floors to those on the first floor. Alignment is not required, but placement should not appear haphazard.</i>	The exterior appearance of the third story appears to be an after thought. It does not blend in well with the original architectural plan for Plan 3. When viewing the side elevations, the third story appears to "sit atop" or straddle the second floor. The front facades of the homes, including window placement and relationships, appear orderly.

Single-Family Home Design Techniques	Comments
<i>Consider the use of more than one wall material to separate first and second floor building elements. Lighter appearing materials should be used on upper floors while heavy materials (e.g. stone) are appropriate for the ground floor. Alternatively, subtle changes of color between ground and second floor areas can reduce the visual bulk of homes so long as the color changes are made at trim pieces or other natural dividing lines between the floors.</i>	The applicant proposes to make use of at least two materials on each elevation. The front elevations often make use of three materials. Color and material changes take place at logical locations on each elevation.

**Landscaping:** No landscaping modifications are proposed with this permit application.

**Parking:** No parking modifications are proposed with this permit application. When the original project was approved, there were two garage spaces and two driveway spaces approved for each dwelling units. In addition, the applicant provided 14 parking spaces along the private street.

Staff considers the creation of three-story homes to be an intensification of the project. The creation of a large bonus room (potential bedroom) could encourage larger families to consider purchasing a home in this project. Doing so would make the provision of additional on-street parking more important to the success of the project. Staff is recommending as a condition of approval (COA 1F) that the applicant provide up to 9 more street/guest parking spaces within the project (0.5 per three-story unit). These can either be provided along the private street, if possible, or by reducing the number of units to create more area for guest parking.

**Compliance with Development Standards/Guidelines:** The applicant is requesting a deviation from the Municipal Code regarding building height in the R-2/PD Zoning District. The Zoning Code allows a maximum height of 30 feet and two stories in the R-2 zoning district; however, the previously approved project was approved with, and limited to, two-story house plans that were 24 - 27 feet in height. The proposed third-story bonus room would increase the height to 34.5 feet for all houses indicated as Plan 2 on the approve development plan (18 out of 55 units). This change would appear on approximately every third unit in the project.

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**Expected Impact on the Surroundings:** The proposed third story would impact the adjacent surrounding properties, because the third story would be

visually imposing within the approved planned project and would be out of place in the predominately two-story general neighborhood.

### **Fiscal Impact**

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No fiscal impacts other than normal fees and taxes are expected.

### **Public Contact**

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**Planning Commission Study Session:** This project was reviewed at a Planning Commission study session on February 13, 2006. The Planning Commission expressed interest in exploring the option of basements instead of a third story. The applicant has stated that there is currently no cost effective and efficient way to produce a neighborhood incorporating basements within the current construction schedule and methods used for production homes.

The Commission also commented that a third story which was better incorporated into the house design, like a dormer, may be more acceptable. The applicant has chosen not to modify the proposed architecture in response to the Study Session comments.

The Commission also requested information about the height of buildings on adjacent lots. Staff has revisited the Alberta Avenue neighborhood to verify building heights. When viewing the vicinity map at the beginning of this report, along the west, east and south boundaries are two-story apartments with setbacks ranging from approximately 10-20 feet from the shared property line with the project site. At the very southeast corner are some three-story apartment units located at south end of Tenaka Place. Along Alberta Avenue are one-story duplexes.

<b>Notice of Negative Declaration and Public Hearing</b>	<b>Staff Report</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published in the <i>Sun</i> newspaper</li> <li>Posted on the site</li> <li>Approximately 500 notices were mailed to the property owners and residents within 300 ft. of the project site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posted on the City of Sunnyvale's Website</li> <li>Provided at the Reference Section of the City of Sunnyvale's Public Library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posted on the City's official notice bulletin board</li> <li>City of Sunnyvale's Website</li> <li>Recorded for SunDial</li> </ul>

## **Conclusion**

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Staff is recommending denial for this project because the Findings (Attachment A) were not made. However, if the Planning Commission is able to make the required findings, staff is recommending the Conditions of Approval (Attachment B).

## **Alternatives**

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1. Deny the Special Development Permit.
2. Approve the Special Development Permit, with attached conditions.
3. Approve the Special Development Permit conditions.

## **Recommendation**

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Alternative 1, deny the project.

Prepared by:



Gerri Caruso  
Principal Planner

Attachments:

- A. Recommended Findings
- B. Conditions of Approval
- C. Site and Architectural Plans

## **Recommended Findings - Special Development Permit**

Goals and Policies that relate to this project are:

### **Community Design Sub-Element Policy A.2:**

Ensure that new development is compatible with the character of special districts and residential neighborhoods.

### **Community Design Sub-Element Policy C.5:**

Ensure that buildings are appropriate to their context and designed to be compatible with surrounding properties and special districts.

### **Land Use and Transportation Element Policy N1.4.5:**

Require amenities with new development that serve the needs of residents.

1. **The proposed use attains the objectives and purposes of the General Plan of the City of Sunnyvale** (Finding not met) The proposed three-story design is not compatible in scale and bulk with Sunnyvale's established development standards and visual expectations for single-family home neighborhoods and will be out of character with the surrounding neighborhood of primarily two-story buildings. The scale and orientation of the proposed third-story is not integrated well into the architecture and is incompatible with design of the original two-story house plan.
2. **The proposed use ensures that the general appearance of proposed structures, or the uses to be made of the property to which the application refers, will not impair either the orderly development of, or the existing uses being made of, adjacent properties** (Finding not met) The proposed three-story design is imposing to the predominantly two-story residential properties on adjacent lots. The architecture is of unacceptable proportions and design and will be detrimental to the quality of the neighborhood appearance. Also, adding to the size of the units will increase the neighborhood intensity without providing the amenity of additional parking, thereby creating a potential impact to the surrounding neighborhood.

**Recommended Conditions of Approval - Special Development Permit /Use Permit**

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In addition to complying with all applicable City, County, State and Federal Statutes, Codes, Ordinances, Resolutions and Regulations, Permittee expressly accepts and agrees to comply with the following conditions of approval of this Permit:

Unless otherwise noted, all conditions shall be subject to the review of approval of the Director of Community Development.

**1. GENERAL CONDITIONS**

- A. Project shall be in conformance with the plans approved at the public hearing(s). Minor changes may be approved by the Director of Community Development, major changes may be approved at a public hearing.
- B. Any major site and architectural plan modifications shall be treated as an amendment of the original approval and shall be subject to approval at a public hearing except that minor changes of the approved plans may be approved by staff level by the Director of Community Development.
- C. The Conditions of Approval shall be reproduced on a page of the plans submitted for a Building Permit for this project. Building Permit plans shall be accompanied by an annotated set of the conditions of approval indicating how the project complies with each condition.
- D. The Special Development Permit shall be null and void two years from the date of approval by the final review authority at a public hearing if the approval is not exercised, unless a written request for an extension is received prior to expiration date...
- E. Comply with all requirements of previously approved Special Development Permit File Number 2005-0622.
- F. Provide nine additional guest parking spaces within the project.